Fundraising and Sustainability for FIRST teams - FALL 2012

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**FUNDRAISING**

**Ability** (to give) **Belief** (in common with you) **Connection** (with someone on your team)

**\*\*\* Who cares about getting students excited about science and technology**

**Who to ask:**

A relationship. Start with who you know. Who cares about what you do? Start local.

**Communication:** PR is an investment in making connections

Broad – news media – smaller newspapers especially hungry for news. All media have shorter staffing

Specific –

Emails to contacts,

School networks,

Robot demonstrations at community events, sponsors, potential sponsors

Social Media?

**Message:** What do they care about?

Key points

Who, what when where why how – still works!

Include budget - And be specific about what you are asking funding for. Ie. Team registration, Team Computer,

Use resources on FIRST website [www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org)

**How to deliver your message** – the more personal the better you can communicate.

Visit Call Letter Email Application Combination

Say thank you. Again. Again. Keep in touch. Tell them what and how your team is doing.

Invite them to your events – Treat them like a VIP

Say thank you! (Seven times is a fundraisers rule of thumb – includes recognition (make it personal- from the students is even better) - Ideas - Team photo in a fancy matte signed by all the students - include the robot in the picture. Send them a copy of your chairman's award. Send pictures of the students.

**Grant Resources: (Search engines help tremendously) as do having an employee associated with your team in some capacity (mentor, etc.). Here are a few ideas.**

- School PTA’s – special projects, student club grants

- Greensboro’s The Community Foundation: <http://www.cfgg.org/receive/grant_teen_council>

- Harris Teeter TIE - Together in Education: <http://www.harristeeter.com/community/together_in_education/tie.aspx>

- Best Buy Store Donation -<https://www.easymatch.com/bestbuygrant/>

- Best Buy Children’s Foundation - <https://www.easymatch.com/bestbuygrant/>

- Caterpillar Foundation - <http://www.caterpillar.com/sustainability/caterpillar-foundation>

- TE Connectivity Community Grant - <http://www.tycoelectronics.com/aboutus/community/foundation.asp>

- Duke Energy Foundation Grants - <http://www.duke-energy.com/community/foundation.asp>

- Home Depot - Stores have a limited supply of $25 donation coupons to assist local nonprofits with their small donation needs. See a member of the store management team for more information - <https://corporate.homedepot.com/CorporateResponsibility/HDFoundation/Pages/ComImpactGrant.aspx>

- Walmart Local Giving Program - <http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants>

- Time Warner - Connect a Million Minds - <http://www.connectamillionminds.com/request-support>

- Proctor and Gamble (Greensboro and Henderson) - <http://www.pg.com/en_US/sustainability/social_responsibility/grant_application.shtml>

- NASA Grant - watch for announcement from FIRST

- PTC FRC/FTC <http://www.ptc.com/appserver/wcms/forms/index.jsp?&im_dbkey=130376&icg_dbkey=482>

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**All About The Students Build Relationships Communicate**

**Support the Students:** It’s All About the STUDENTS – The Whole FIRST Experience

* Enable and Involve the Students – build facility, finances, acquiring tools/supplies/materials, engaging mentors, training, all aspects of Team Management
* Establish a Routine that works for your Students – are you a Jan – Apr Team? A 12 month Team? Somewhere in between???
* Understand the team demographics – geography, extra-curriculars, homework, college planning, athletics, etc.

**Build Relationships:**

* **Local Community** - Schools, school governing bodies, local politicians, local businesses, local foundations/grant giving organizations, Non-profits (ie. Elks, Mooselodge, Veteran groups), community colleges, 4 year colleges/universities, professional associations, media
* **Regional Director** – NC FIRST – Marie Hopper
* **At the Competitions -**  make contacts with judges/volunteers
* **Within the Team –** With students, parents and mentors. Include people, ask them to help with a specific task, ask what their interests are, and keep everyone informed.
* **Cultivate a community/family environment**

**Communicate:** How do you communicate and who is your audience.

* Community – Develop a communications plan – Important to the success of your team
  + Strengthens ties to community, generates public relations, increases buy-in from stakeholders, potential sponsors and donors
  + WHO with – all the folks you want to build relationships with.
  + HOW – Newspapers, Newsletters (electronic and paper), Team Website, Press Release, Team marketing material (brochure, wish list, FIRST marketing material from FIRST Website, judge’s book
  + Helpful Hints – Establish PR Committee, create calendar, outreach organizer, proofread any stories going into print prior to their release. Be sure the PR team knows the FIRST facts, all forms of communication should use the team image (ie. colors, mascot, logo, etc.)
  + Team Communications – WHO & HOW -Written (electronic & paper) and Verbal, Emergency Communications –
    - Conversations (back & forth exchange of ideas), Clear & Concise, Share Big Picture, Listen, Realistic Expectations, Share good news/team successes, Positive Role Model, consider message & method of comms

**CONTINUITY:**  What else to consider – how to get from one year to the next…**NEED A TEAM ORGANIZER**

* Paperwork – Team Applications, student rosters, emergency contact information, mentor contact lists, email lists, Consent forms, Permission slips, T-Shirt sizes, Roles and Responsibilities (mentor and student), Chaperone duties,
* Treasurer/Fundraiser/Finance Mentor – Manage the budget, find income, student fees, financial reviews (PTA Treasurer money matters, good source of info how to do things)
* Consider becoming an incorporation, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt
  + Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Insurance, Form 1023 (IRS), EIN
  + <http://thinktank.wpi.edu/article/105> - Team 228 Gus Robotics experience

**RESOURCES:** [**WWW.USFIRST.ORG**](http://WWW.USFIRST.ORG) **– Resources/Workshops, team sustainability, etc… (2008 FRC\_Communicating wth the Community & your team (Kentfield)) and 2008FRC\_Fundraising\_Cokeley)**